

STATE URBAN PARKS AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES PROGRAM - 2003 Public Comments

9/26/03

TOPIC	COMMENT	VENUE	RESPONSE
Program Intent	Under section III, State Urban Parks and Healthy Communities Program Intent, there is no mention of projects being developed for "youth", yet the facility/venue definition includes "youth" and several of the criteria questions include "youth" as a focus. If this grant is intended to provide facilities for youth, it should be stated in the program intent.	e-mail	The Program Intent section of the procedural guide has been revised.
Eligible Applicants	Why is Napa county not included as an eligible county?	e-mail	Eligible applicants were defined in legislation. No change to the procedural guide.
	Why can non-profits compete for these funds? Was it in the legislation?	e-mail	Eligible applicants were defined in legislation. No change to the procedural guide.
Eligible Projects	Can eligible projects for this program be new facilities to be constructed, or do projects have to be renovation or enhancement of existing facilities?	e-mail	New facilities are eligible projects as long as the Facility/Venue is designed for Active Recreational Purposes and will be ready for use once the project is complete. In regards to renovation or enhancement, see the definition of "Development" on page 2 of the procedural guide. No change to procedural guide.
Page Count	The written response to project selection criteria is limited to 12 double-spaced pages. Since this is effectively 6 pages, we request an increase in the number of pages accepted to address the 9 criteria.	e-mail	Comment considered. No change to the procedural guide.
Project Selection Criteria	Demographics of the jurisdiction that will benefit from the project should be taken into consideration in assessing need. Recommend that percentage unemployment, per capita income, median household income, and percentage poverty be taken into consideration.	e-mail	Comment considered. No change to the procedural guide.
Criteria #6	Criterion 6 may be unfair to CBOs, whose projects and support come from a smaller jurisdiction. Criterion 6 asks that CBOs partner with other CBOs to share in running the proposed project. Because CBOs are community based, there may be only one, which umbrellas the whole community, supporting the project. The project can then include all types of facilities (baseball, football), without having separate CBOs for each of these to form "partnerships." Many different people can use the same facility, thereby making it fall under a different definition of "joint use."	e-mail	Comment considered. No change to the procedural guide.

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Criteria #6	CBOs can still have “partners,” or community members and local businesses that support the project and donate time and supplies. In fact, CBOs may have distinct advantage in forming long-lasting partnerships with the community, because community members and local businesses will likely want to preserve their community’s accomplishment. In comparison, community members may feel that other applicants, like the local parks department, have enough funding for future maintenance and do not require them as “partners.”	e-mail	Comment considered. No change to the procedural guide.
	Unfortunately, under the current definition of “joint use” and “partner,” these long-term community partnerships are not valid. Criterion 6 should be re-written to reflect the idea that, for CBOs, joint use can include having different types of facilities open to the community and forming partnerships within the community.	e-mail	Comment considered. No change to the procedural guide.
Criteria #7	Criterion 7 asks for a long-term maintenance plan, including “funding and other resources.” Because CBOs do not have ongoing funding like other applicants, they may have difficulty finding funding sources for future maintenance. State Parks should focus the grading of these applicants on the “other resources” aspect, including long-term community and local business donations of time and supplies.	e-mail	Comment considered. No change made to Criterion #7. See changes made to Criterion #9 and page 22, “Eligible Match Sources”.
	Additionally, because CBOs have less experience, State Parks should work with them to develop long-term maintenance plans that emphasize community collaboration, including the formation of “friends of the park” societies.	e-mail	Not a procedural guide issue.
Criteria #9	Although elsewhere in the document it states that non-monetary sources are legitimate, it is important that Criterion 9 be reworded to reflect the importance of community and local business contributions of time and supplies. As stated in Criterion 9, it is very important that there are enough resources to complete the entire project. Unfortunately, because the contributions CBOs receive from the community may be primarily non-monetary, the CBOs may unintentionally omit them and score lower than other applicants.	e-mail	Comment considered. Text within Criteria #9 revised to reflect this comment.

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Administrative Provisions			
Fidelity Bonds	Fidelity Bond Insurance: The Draft Procedural Guide indicates that all non-profit organizations applying for money under this program must have Fidelity Bond Insurance. If this is something that not all CBOs would otherwise have, and if it is costly, it will be another limiting factor in whether or not small organizations can actually apply for this funding, and will, again, favor municipalities.	e-mail	Comment considered. No change to the procedural guide.
Timeline Issues	The long period of time between now and the application deadline, and the undefined time between application submission and notification of grant make Resource Bond money difficult to use.	e-mail	Program deadlines are defined by Public Resource Code and the State Budget cycle. No change to the procedural guide.
	Especially in Los Angeles, where open land is scarce, an organization may site a piece of land and decide that that is the place on which they will build and develop with the Resource Bond money, but be unable to act in time. By the time the application is approved and the first payment installation made, that piece of land will likely be sold to another party who has the money at the right time.		See above.
	Additionally, the Draft Procedural Guide does not outline the amount of time between application submission and decision notification anywhere in the document. It is unclear if applicants will have to wait one month or one year to find out whether they have secured Bond Act funding.	e-mail	Comment considered. No change to the procedural guide.
Match & Waiver	Many CBOs may require matching funds waivers, but the paragraph on page 23, describing how to obtain a waiver, is not very specific. State Parks should either include more detail in the paragraph describing what successful match waiver should be in the letter, or should develop tools to help CBOs to write letters.	e-mail	Comment considered. No change to the procedural guide.

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Match & Waiver	Additionally, the match waiver letter could be submitted and notification of match waiver returned prior to the submission of the project application to ensure that understaffed and financially strapped CBOs do not spend an inordinate amount of time preparing an application for a program for which they will not be eligible if their matching funds waiver is not approved. This step would allow them to complete the application process only if they are assured a matching funds waiver.	e-mail	Comment considered. No change to the procedural guide.
Programmatic vs. Capital Improvements	The Draft Procedural Guide explicitly states that Resources Bond Act money can be used only for development or purchase of land, or capital improvements. This not only favors municipalities, but also denies funding to community-based organizations that, though they cannot afford to buy and develop parcels of land, are developing community programming in partnership with land owners/managers.	e-mail	Comment considered. No change to the procedural guide.
	Most CBOs cannot secure the funding to purchase land, especially when a 10 or 20-year tenure of that land is required. This, combined with the lack of support for programming, disadvantages CBOs and favors municipalities.	e-mail	Comment considered. No change to the procedural guide.
General Info. Re: CBOs	Because the Draft Guide is similar to the procedural guides created for other bond programs, we feel that the Draft Guide may be inhibitive to the applicants closest to the people – the Community Based Organizations (CBOs).	e-mail	Comment considered. No change to the procedural guide.
	Compared with other types of grant applicants, CBOs are more reflective of their communities, but are also less experienced and have less financial means.	e-mail	Not a procedural guide issue. Thank you for your comment.

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General Info. Re: CBOs	According to the University of Southern California publication "Parks and Park Funding in Los Angeles: An Equity Mapping Analysis," CBOs have had difficulty obtaining the Los Angeles-based Proposition K funds. Although the study analyzes Proposition K distribution, the reasons for the CBOs difficulty seem to similarly apply to the distribution of funds under the State Urban parks and Healthy Communities Act. According to the publication, "In general, Proposition K Requests for Proposals (RFPs) may be difficult for community-based organizations to complete, because of their length and detailed, time-consuming questions...in some cases [CBOs] must be able to identify additional sources to maintain facility improvements... A CBO must compete directly with the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and other agencies with extensive experience in applying for public funds."	e-mail	Not a procedural guide issue. Thank you for your comment.
Technical Assistance	We believe that the Draft Guide creates unintentional barriers for CBOs that are similar to those described above, and that the California Department of Parks and Recreation ("State Parks") should provide more assistance to CBOs to fill out successful applications.	e-mail	Comment considered. No change to the procedural guide.